



YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE 

## **President Obama's Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders**

Embassy of the United States of America, Zambia

President Obama launched the Young African Leaders Initiative in 2010 as a signature initiative that supports young African leaders as they work to spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across the African continent. On June 29, 2013, at a town hall meeting with youth in Johannesburg, South Africa, President Obama introduced the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders representing a major expansion of U.S. investment in the continent's next cadre of leaders.

### **What is the Washington Fellowship Program?**

The Washington Fellowship is the new flagship program of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative. The program will bring over 500 young leaders to the United States each year, beginning in mid-2014, for leadership training and mentoring. Follow-on platforms in each country will create unique opportunities in Africa for these young leaders to put their new skills to practical use in propelling economic growth and prosperity, and strengthening democratic institutions. Twenty-five young Zambians will be competitively selected to be part of the first Washington Fellowship Program in 2014.

### **What is included in the Program?**

Washington Fellows will attend top U.S. universities and colleges for a six-week training period in one of three leadership institutes:

Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes: Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will cater to the range of aspiring entrepreneurs who hope to take on leadership roles within the private sector or start their own business ventures on the continent. Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will expose participants to business and entrepreneurial approaches in the United States, including those that are employed to address social issues. Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will also build technical and leadership capacity in areas such as strategy, operations, supply chain management, business ethics, social entrepreneurship, microfinance, organizational development and management, marketing, innovation and technology, emerging markets and risk analysis, strategic business planning, and corporate social responsibility.

Civic Leadership Institutes: Civic Leadership Institutes will be oriented to young Africans who are civically engaged and serving the public through non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, or volunteerism. Civic Leadership Institutes will expose participants to the meaning of

civic leadership in the United States, while building technical and leadership capacity in areas such as citizenship, community building, economic development, grassroots activism, political organizing and leadership, and volunteerism. In order to define the content of the Institute and enhance the academic experience, programs may focus on a specific theme or sub-themes such as organizational management, strategic planning, fundraising, community relations and outreach, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, media, and coalition-building.

Public Management Institutes: Public Management Institutes will be tailored to young Africans who work or aspire to work in all levels of government agencies, regional organizations such as the African Union, international organizations such as the United Nations, or other publicly-minded organizations or think tanks. Public Management Institutes will expose participants to U.S. public management models and best practices, while building technical and leadership capacity in areas such as transparency, procurement, public financial management, government tender processes, legislative/executive collaboration, citizen engagement and outreach, human resource management, program implementation, and policy formulation.

The Fellows will receive tailored training in the sectors above, leveraging top faculty, cutting-edge curricula, and local opportunities to impart practical professional and leadership training. Formal university training will be augmented by workshops, mentoring, and networking opportunities with leaders in each field, as well as a limited number of internships, awarded on a competitive basis, across the United States. For example, U.S. agencies such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Export-Import Bank will host Washington Fellows as interns in Washington, D.C., to expose them to the U.S. workplace and practices and build their technical skills. Washington Fellows will also benefit from partnerships with American companies like Boeing, which will provide leadership training at the Boeing Leadership Center in St. Louis to extend Fellows' campus-based training. The Fellows will also have the chance to interact with President Obama during an annual Summit in Washington, D.C., along with other senior U.S. government, business, and civic leaders.

Washington Fellows' U.S.-based training will only be the beginning of the United States' long-term investment in these young leaders. To ensure that participants can put their newly-acquired skills and experiences to use, the U.S. government is working with business, governments and institutions to create meaningful opportunities for the Fellows once back home in Africa.

### **How can a young leader apply for the Washington Fellowship Program?**

Online applications will be available in early December and will be due in late January. Following a technical screening and an initial application review, semi-finalists will be contacted by posts for an interview in mid-February 2014. Finalists will be selected and notified in April, and assigned to a U.S. host institute based on the appropriate theme: business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, or public management. The Institutes and Presidential Summit will take place in summer 2014.

**Who is eligible to apply?**

- Be a citizen of and reside in a sub-Saharan African country, such as Zambia (persons holding U.S. citizenship or permanent residency are ineligible)
- Speak and write proficiently in English
- Be between 25 – 35 years of age at the time of application submission, although exceptional candidates younger than 25 will be considered

**What are the criteria for selection?**

- A proven record of leadership and accomplishment in public service, business or entrepreneurship, or civic engagement
- A demonstrated commitment to public or community service, volunteerism, or mentorship
- The ability to work cooperatively in diverse groups and respect the opinions of others
- Strong social and communication skills
- Good academic performance, with preference given to applicants with some university education
- An energetic, positive attitude
- An opportunity to benefit from a U.S.-funded program or exchange for the first time
- A demonstrated knowledge, interest, and professional experience in the track selected
- A commitment to return to Africa and apply leadership skills and training to benefit the applicant's country, community, or school after they return home

**What type of information will be requested in the application?**

The application will collect basic information and will include questions regarding the applicant's professional and academic experience including educational background; honors and awards received; extracurricular and volunteer activities; and English language proficiency. We will also request a curriculum vitae (with dated educational and professional background), personal information (name, address, phone, email, country of citizenship). Additional elements, such as letters of recommendation or university transcripts, are optional and may supplement the application. The online application will be available in early December 2013.

**Will there be written statements in the application?**

Yes, as part of the application, applicants will be asked to provide written responses to essay questions. Questions might include the following: 1) Explain how you have helped introduce a new idea, initiative, or product at your company or organization; 2) What is a challenge that your country, industry, or field faces that you would like to address and what steps and resources would be necessary; 3) Describe an example of a project that required you to attract support from a large group and how you built interest.

**For updated information:**

Visit <http://youngafricanleaders.state.gov/> for more information and to sign up for email updates and notifications about the application process.

Visit <http://Zambia.usembassy.gov/> for more Zambia specific information as it becomes available.

For inquiries, please e-mail: [WFZambia@state.gov](mailto:WFZambia@state.gov)

“ Africa's future belongs to its young people... We need young Africans who are standing up and making things happen not only in their own countries but around the world. ”

*President Barack Obama*